

U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science

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Jane Williams, Acting Executive Director

Highlights of the Year

Jeanne Hurley Simon continued as the Commission's Chairperson. Her nomination to a second term as a Commissioner was pending in the Senate at year's end. Peter R. Young resigned at the end of May as the Executive Director. The longest-serving NCLIS director, Mr. Young went to the Library of Congress to head its Cataloging Distribution Service. Jane Williams was named Acting Executive Director for NCLIS. John G. Lorenz retired in September, having coordinated the Library Statistics Program for NCLIS since 1988.

An NCLIS Commissioner since 1992, Gary N. Sudduth died July 28, 1997. He was President and Chief Executive Officer of the Minneapolis Urban League. Mr. Sudduth was a member of the Minneapolis Public Library Board of Trustees for over ten years. As Board President, he led planning for a new \$150 million facility.

The only new Commissioner in 1997 was José-Marie Griffiths, a well known and respected information scientist and presently the University of Michigan's Chief Information Officer. Dr. Griffiths replaced Shirley Adamovich.

Continuing Commissioners are NCLIS Vice Chair Martha Gould, Abe Abramson, Walter Anderson, LeVar Burton, Joan Challinor, Mary Furlong, Frank Lucchino, Bobby Roberts, Joel Valdez and Robert Willard. Winston Tabb represents James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress, a permanent NCLIS member. Diane Frankel, Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, is an ex officio Commissioner.

Efforts begun by Executive Director Young continued throughout 1997, chiefly a study for the Government Printing Office on electronic government information and co-sponsorship with the American Library Association of a third survey of public libraries and the Internet. NCLIS also embarked on its first year of advising on the Library Services and Technology Act

The NCLIS budget for FY 1997 was \$897,000 up from the \$829,000 for FY 1996, and back to the level for FY 1995. The budget for FY 1998, which began October 1, 1997, is \$1 million, the largest ever for NCLIS. The Commission met in May and October. The search committee for a new director also met twice and at year's end the appointment of a new director was pending.

Support for Executive and Legislative Branches

In 1997 NCLIS advised on major issues of federal policy concerning libraries and information services:

1. federal support for libraries as enacted in the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)
2. copyright and intellectual property
3. access to government information.

During the year the Commission focused on the general policy advice it is mandated to give IMLS on federal grant programs for libraries under the new LSTA, which consolidates library funds for technology and services, retains state-based programs for most of the funds and removes federal targeting of funds for public libraries. Both the state-based and discretionary grants began with FY 1998 funding, so 1997 was the time to plan and prepare.

The NCLIS Chairperson and the Executive Director met often with the IMLS Director on the processes and priorities for advising on the Library Services and Technology Act. The Commission was represented at a March 1997 gathering called by the IMLS Director so that library and museum people could acquaint her with their needs and wishes for the new agency and the new federal program. Commissioners advised on IMLS' strategic plan.

Within this new context for federal grant programs for libraries, NCLIS Commissioners concentrated on advice for the National Leadership Grants, which include education and training, research and demonstration, preservation or digitization of library materials and cooperative efforts between libraries and museums. In May NCLIS had its first joint meeting with the National Museum Services Board, to advise on the library-museum cooperative portion of the National Leadership Grants. The IMLS subsequently published draft guidelines, on which NCLIS and others commented, and then published the final set, by which to judge applications and awards in 1998.

In other executive matters, NCLIS staff and consultants worked closely with the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs on the study of electronic government information and also with the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, operating the Library Statistics Program and assessing NCLIS' role in it. These items are covered elsewhere in this report.

The Commission was involved in legislative discussions of intellectual property, with draft bills to implement the 1996 treaty of the World Intellectual Property Organization regarding copyright, performances and phonograms. In addition, NCLIS responded to the Office of Management and Budget's Legislative Reference Division on inquiries for views on bills, draft bills and drafts of testimony for reforming government printing. NCLIS urged

1. completing evaluations then underway before changing U.S. Code Title 44, Public Printing and Documents and
2. attending to function, not just organization (e.g., executive vs. legislative)
3. giving whatever agency/agencies responsible for procuring, presenting and preserving public information the resources and authority to meet its/their mandates.

Library and Information Services in a Networked Environment

In 1997 negotiations continued on the study, "Assessment of Standards for the Creation, Dissemination and Permanent Accessibility of Electronic Government Information Products," to be conducted by NCLIS pursuant to a January inter-agency agreement with the Government Printing Office (GPO).

The Computer Science and Telecommunications Board (of the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences) developed an overall study framework, which recommended that the over-arching goal should be to evaluate the availability, reliability and accessibility of existing or planned electronic information products of the federal government, whether disseminated to the public through the Federal Depository Library Program or directly, via agencies' electronic services such as Web sites.

In August 1997 NCLIS employed consultant Forest Woody Horton to develop a statement of work for a contractor, to collect basic data from a sample of federal agencies' electronic public information products. The purpose of collecting these data are to identify and evaluate some of the problems and trends as a result of migrating information products from paper and microform to electronic formats and mediums.

By late 1997 the Government Printing Office and the Joint Committee on Printing (U.S. Congress) had approved the statement of work and NCLIS was negotiating for a contractor to collect the data. The study will be completed in 1998. The final report will present finding, conclusions and recommendations upon which the federal government might take further action.

With the American Library Association as primary sponsor and coordinator, NCLIS co-sponsored the 1997 survey of public libraries and the Internet. Principal investigators were John Bertot, assistant professor, Department of Information Systems, University of Maryland Baltimore County, and Charles McClure, Distinguished Professor, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University. Major findings are the following:

- 72.3% of central or headquarter public libraries are connected to the Internet, up from 42.9% in 1996.
- 12% of central or headquarter public libraries have connected some or all of their branch libraries to the Internet.

- 87% of central city libraries, 83.5% of suburban libraries and 66% of rural libraries have Internet connections.
- 100% of libraries serving over one million population are connected; 95.5% of libraries serving 500,000 to one million; 93.1% of libraries serving 100,000 to 499,999; 92.5% of libraries serving 25,000 to 99,999; 79.2% of libraries serving 5,000 to 24,999; 56.3% of libraries serving fewer than 5,000.

Two thousand libraries were surveyed, with a 71.3% response rate. The sample was drawn from the universe file of public libraries, set up as part of the Library Statistics Program. In the fall the American Library Association published a summary report for broad distribution and in early 1998 will publish the full report. The Commission contracted with the report's authors for a short, analytical report, identifying policy issues and trends from the 1997 and earlier surveys that NCLIS sponsored. This policy document will be published in early 1998.

Throughout the year NCLIS stayed abreast of developments with the Federal Communications Commission regarding universal service discounts for libraries and schools. In several sets of 1996 comments to the FCC, NCLIS stressed identifying high-cost and economically disadvantaged areas and noted the importance of discounts that facilitate access to advanced network services sufficient to individual communities' needs.

NCLIS commented on "A Framework for Global Electronic Commerce," a paper from the Interagency Working Group on Electronic Commerce and the Administration's starting point for developing strategies to accelerate the growth of global commerce across the Internet. The Commission recommended that needs of students and citizens be addressed by involving libraries and schools in issues addressed by the paper. NCLIS also suggested a framework principle addressing universal service.

Other activities in the area of networked services in an electronic environment included staff attendance at various meetings such as those of the Conference on Fair Use. Staff also coordinated plans for a task force on output measures for electronic library services and met with the Executive Branch Printing Study Team to discuss reinventing government printing for the 21st century.

Library Statistics

For the tenth consecutive year NCLIS and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) operated the Library Statistics Program (LSP) through a memorandum of agreement, under which the Commission serves as liaison to the library community, helps plan the content of meetings and training workshops, monitors trends and advises NCES on policy matters.

In the summer of 1997 NCLIS proposed and NCES agreed to fund an assessment of the Library Statistics Program, especially NCLIS' role. Consultant Howard Harris

began the assessment in August 1997. Results will be published in early 1998 and will address

- Values NCLIS contributes to and derives from the LSP,
- Goals NCLIS and NCES share for the program,
- Directions for NCLIS' future involvement,
- Long-term goals for improving the program.

The survey of state library agencies continued, with data for FY 1995 published in August 1997. A steering committee recommended revisions and improvements for these annual data collections.

A national survey of library cooperatives was prepared. Cooperatives include library networks, systems, consortiums with formal arrangements to support library and information services for the mutual benefit of participating libraries. A universe file of library cooperatives was compiled and a survey instrument drafted.

For the eighth consecutive year, data on public libraries were collected, reviewed and distributed. The 1994 data were published in May 1997. The annual workshop for state data coordinators for public library data was held in March 1997.

Academic library data are collected biennially as part of the Integrated Postsecondary Data System. The American Library Association's Office for Research and Statistics and a committee of academic library specialists advises NCES and NCLIS on improving the biennial survey.

On September 15-16, NCLIS and NCES co-sponsored the fifth annual Forum on Library and Information Services Policy, "Library Services and Technology Act, State Grant Programs: Implications for Use of and Additions to National Library Data." The forums' objectives are to ensure that statistics about libraries and information services meet the needs of policy-makers and to help guide development of public policy on libraries and information services.

International Activities

The Commission completed its twelfth year of cooperation with the Department of State to coordinate and monitor proposals for International Contributions for Scientific, Educational and Cultural Activities (ICSECA) funds and to disburse the funds. The allocation for ICSECA, included in the State Department's International Organizations and Programs account, was formerly under International Conventions and Scientific Organizations Contributions (ICSOC). The amount for FY 1997 was \$100,000, up from the \$35,000 for FY 1996.

NCLIS was represented at the 1997 general conference of the International Federation of Library Associations in Copenhagen and will be an International Distinguished Partner for the 2001 IFLA conference in Boston. The Commission also

contracted for a survey of U.S. participation in international library and archive activities and will use this baseline inventory to assess and develop its international role.

The Commission continued to host or lead sessions to orient and share information with librarians and other officials visiting the U.S., usually under the auspices of the U.S. Information Agency. In 1997 visitors were from Bolivia, Brazil, the People's Republic of China, France, Japan and Russia.

Publications

Annual Report, 1995-96.

Reports, hearings and other publications are available on the Commission's Web site:
<<http://www.nclis.gov>>